

**Camilla Løw****Chain on Chain**

14.10.14 – 29.11.14

*Private view: Thursday 16th October 2014, 9.30 – 11.30 am*

There is that often quoted line by Buckminster Fuller, typically cosmic in its outlook, which declares that 'there are no straight lines in the universe'. Oscar Niemeyer wrote something similar about his ambivalence to the hard angle in his *Poema da Curva*. The difference between constructed form — that is those made industrially at the initiation of man — and organic form, lies at the heart of Camilla Løw's modular, often playful, concrete and steel, glass and fabric sculptures.

Recently the Glasgow-educated, Oslo-based, artist has begun to make this interest explicit. Take the 2013 installation *One Night Only*, a series of cast concrete floor-based objects, each taking a different simple angular shape as its form — a trapezoid for example, a pentagon — all smooth in polished surface, bar a small hollow on the top. They are aesthetically pleasing, tactile, blocks in their own right: they ask one to consider the space that their heftiness is taking up. They are both blocks and blockages of space. Yet Løw glosses such meditations on the innate physicality of the sculptures with a further, social, humanistic, layer. Brightly, gaily, sprouting from the top of one concrete lump is a huddle of planted flowers. The delicate, organic variation of their petals, and messiness of their untameable stalks, grow at odds with the precision lines of the container. The flowers give the sculpture a pragmatic purpose: a suggestion of the municipal furniture of the city, of public space and human desire. The flowers elevate the work beyond minimalism and into everyday life.

It is with this understanding that we can evaluate much of Løw's recent work. Take her solo exhibition in

2013 at Elastic Gallery, Malmö. As well as a series in which similar concrete blocks are rested on wall-hung oak frames, inducing thoughts of the domestic design, the exhibition also included *Fever*, a floor-based metal sheet leant on the gallery wall. Yet the pleasing pristine spray-painted yellow surface has been disrupted by a series of gauged incisions. It's a violent, perhaps passionate work, purposely at odds with the lineage of art history the unharmed sheet might have sought after. The artist will frequently use cord too — teasing the viewer with the imprecision of the material — strung up with different types of knots. In *Joy* (2009) for example, in which a platted multicoloured rope droops low in a loop from a white frame, the question of the artist's control arises. The exact, immobile placement of the latter; placed with purpose, at odds with the seeming arbitrary hang of the latter. It's this minimalist aesthetic and formalist materiality, combined with an interest in human interaction; that marks the artist out.

For her forthcoming exhibition at Belmacz, London, Løw will take this theme further, utilising this unique setting to experiment with lines of sight and the demarcation of space, to question how we interact with objects within a spatial environment. Hanging planes of colour — both opaque and transparent — will colonise the space, alternatively obstructing and revealing the interior architecture of the gallery. As the viewer manoeuvres around the sculptures, looks through them, looks around them, the work gives rise to the fundamental question of whether art lies within the intrinsic object, or within the viewer's activation of the material.



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**Camilla Løw** was born in 1976 in Norway. She graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2001, and is currently living and working in Oslo.

Recent solo exhibitions include *The Space of Shape-Time* at the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo and *Spring Rain*, ELASTIC Gallery, Malmö (2013), *New Ruins*, Bergen Kunsthall No.5 (2008) and *Straight Letters*, Dundee Contemporary Arts / Piers Arts Centre, Orkney (2008). Recent group shows are *Dumb Rocks*, Belmacz Gallery, London (2013), *The Thing* (2009), curated by Dieter Roelstraete, MuKHA, Antwerp, *Constructivismes*, Almine Rech, Brussels (2009), *Almost Always is Nearly Enough*, Standard, Oslo (2009), *Idealismusstudio*, Grazer Kunstverein; *Standard Sizes* (2008) and *Dump: Postmodern Sculpture in the Dissolved Field*, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo (2007).

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